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United States Joint Forces Command
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Fact Sheet – Common Relevant Operational Picture:

A Functional Warfighting Concept

What is CROP?

The *Common Relevant Operational Picture* (CROP) concept is a key enabler to Joint Command and Control, enhanced battlespace awareness and the integrating concepts such as Rapid Decisive Operations (RDO). The CROP is a functional concept that proposes the presentation of timely, fused, accurate, assured, and relevant information that can be tailored to meet the requirements of the joint force commander and the joint force. The goal is to find and present only that best set of relevant information the warfighting commander needs to make good decisions and to act. This is critical because a rapid decisive operation will be won through rapid, decisive actions.

The CROP concept is sufficiently robust and adaptable to accommodate the full range of exchange of information with non-DOD organizations (including governmental, international, and private) and coalition forces. It embraces and mutually supports the existing common tactical pictures of the Services. The resultant presentation of information will be rapidly accessible by all approved users and will support the full range of military operations. Simply put, the CROP concept will attempt to define what information needs to be collected, how it should be processed (analysis and fusion), how it wi future.

The CROP is a "**virtual information warehouse**" that links to all the available information by the warfighters require. From this virtual warehouse, decision makers will tailor information displays that are relevant to their individual needs. The tailored displays generated from the common virtual warehouse will provide enhanced and shared battlespace awareness at all levels.

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Why CROP now?

Gathering, exploiting, and protecting information have been critical to command and control throughout history. This will not change. What will differ is the increased access to information and the potential improvements in the speed and accuracy of prioritizing and transferring data that will occur because of technology advances.

An RDO is predicated on leveraging advances in information technology to support a knowledge-centric approach to warfare. This approach will give us an enhanced understanding of an adversary's vulnerabilities. Our warfighters can then use our unique national advantages in mobility and precision to achieve more rapid resolution of small-scale contingencies. We will not have to rely solely upon the application of mass and overwhelming brute force. The CROP concept provides the vehicle for all joint, combined and coalition force users to get relevant information in the format and timeframes they need.

How did we get here?

Experimentation efforts to date have focused on how to determine the generic information requirements of a joint force and how to satisfy those requirements to enable enhanced battlespace awareness. This has been done primarily using legacy means. Numerous seminars, workgroups, and wargames have served as venues to accommodate this approach. Several Limited Objective Experiments (LOEs) as well as the first joint field experiment, Millennium Challenge 2000, allowed joint experimenters to focus on critical battlespace awareness issues such as timeliness, accuracy and the interoperability of legacy systems. However, much work remains and significant experimentation efforts are needed to continue to explore these issues.

What's next?

Future LOEs and field experiments will explore legacy and emerging technologies and processes that focus on enabling the effective "push and pull" of information to deployed users. CROP experimentation efforts will align with advanced concept technology demonstrations (ACTDs), advanced technology demonstrations (ATDs), and Services' future concepts that best support the concept. Determining the best combination of

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Key CROP concept experimentation issues to be addressed in future events include:

- Information Assurance
- Information fusion / processing
- Information sharing with coalition partners and with NGOs/PVOs
- Metadata tagging, exchange formats, semantics
- Multi-Level Security and Multiple Security Levels
- Intelligent search agent technology
- User-needs profiling
- Track database management
- Information Presentation
- End-to-end operational management of information (Theater Information Management)
- Smart delivery systems
- Enterprise Storage Management

The goal of CROP is to find and present only that "best set" of relevant information the warfighting commander needs to make good decisions and to act.